

COLOMBIA TODAY

A Weekly Update from the Embassy of Colombia

June 29, 2015

Advancing Our Goal to Become the Region's Most Educated Nation by 2025

'Tu Eliges': Colombia's Revolutionary Plan to Increase Access to Higher Education

The Colombian Government launched a new student loan program called "*Tu Eliges*," which will allow thousands of young Colombians to finance their college education. Through this revolutionary new program, students from the poorest segments of the population that previously did not qualify for existing government scholarship and loan programs will have access to financing. According to the Minister of Education, Gina Parody, **"The availability of resources cannot be a condition for the accessibility to higher education."**

Under this new system, up to 100 percent of college tuition will be financed without a co-signer, a condition that was previously a major obstacle for accessing education loans for an important segment of the population. This new initiative, along with existing programs like the "Ser Pilo Paga" – a scholarship program that benefits 10,000 of the brightest young Colombians from the poorest communities – and the significant investments in education infrastructure will greatly improve Colombia's education system.

"With this new line of credit – *Tu Eliges* – we take one more step in our mission to guarantee a better education for young Colombians, closing the social gap and advancing on our goal to become the most educated nation in the region," stated President Juan Manuel Santos.



President Santos and Minister Parody. Photo Credit: Ministry of Education



Fostering International Exchanges: Colombian Universities and SENA Present at NAFSA

During the NAFSA 2015 Annual Conference & Expo in Boston last month, the Colombian Vocational Training Service, SENA, presented its alliance with Partners of the Americas, to increase student exchanges and promote youth development. As part of President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative, SENA has committed up to \$250,000 to be matched by CAF – the Development Bank of Latin America – and other donors, to foster pilot projects that increase study abroad opportunities between U.S. community colleges and 117 SENA centers in Colombia.

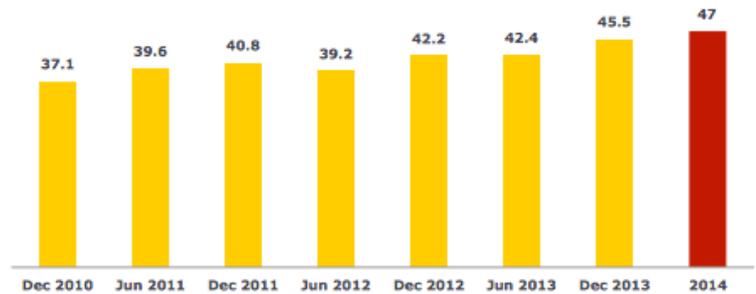
Representatives of Colombia Challenge Your Knowledge (CCYK), a network of 20 accredited universities in Colombia, including internationalization Directors of Universidad de Caldas, Universidad EAFIT and Universidad de los Andes, among others, also attended the largest international education fair in the United States to promote active collaboration between Colombian universities and worldwide institutions.



Education At a Glance: Proof is in the Numbers

Higher education coverage (%)

In 2014, the Government created **10,000 undergraduate scholarships** to be granted to students who cannot afford a university education, under the condition that they complete their studies.

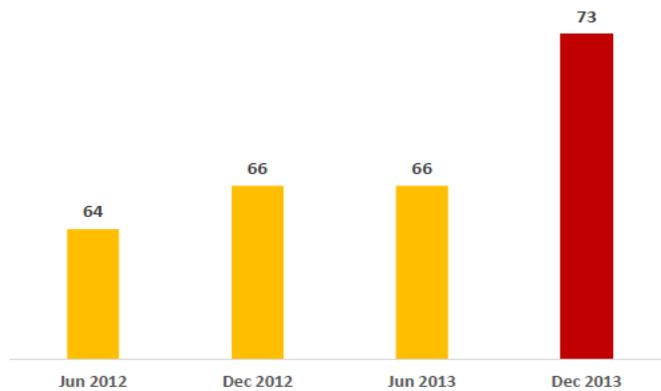


Source: Sinergia

Higher education students with State economic support (%)

"Education is the road to equality. When both a young Colombian with economic resources and one of scarce resources are accepted to the best universities based on merit, they both start from the same base. That is equal opportunities, that is equality and that is peace."

President Juan Manuel Santos,
September 2014



Source: DNP

Colombia Hosts United Nations Public Service Forum in Medellín



Minister of ICT, David Luna, addresses attendees at the 2015 United Nations Public Service Forum in Medellín, Colombia. Photo Credit: Ministry of Information Technology and Communication.

From June 23 through June 26, Colombia hosted the 2015 United Nations Public Service Forum in Medellín. The three-day event focused on this year's theme: "Innovating Public Service Delivery to Implement the Post-2015 Development Agenda," and brought together nearly 1,000 public servants from 100 countries to discuss best practices and challenges in public service. The forum also recognized recipients of the United Nations Public Service Award, which began in 2003 to recognize excellence in public service, and celebrated Public Service Day, designated as June 23 by the UN General Assembly. Colombia is the first Latin American country to host the forum.

Attendees of the forum explored a wide range of topics, including strengthening public service in Latin American countries, the use of e-government, public service management models and more. Colombia was represented by Minister of ICT, David Luna; Governor of Antioquia, Sergio Fajardo; Mayor of Medellín, Aníbal Gaviria; Deputy Director of the National Planning Department, Manuel Fernando Castro; Director of the Administrative Department of Civil Service, Liliana Caballero; and the Vice-minister of IT, María Isabel Mejía.

For more information, visit the event [homepage](#).

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